Moyers Explains New Security Checks

Who Called the White House?

By William Chapman
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Telephone callers' names are recorded and checked inside. A meticulous log is kept of who went where and when in Government cars. One top aide gets reports on what other top aides are asked by reporters.

The CIA? No. The Kremlin? No. It's the White House.

It all came out yesterday as the White House defended some new security and economy practices, acknowledged one that noboby knew existed, and admitted there was a mistake next door when a reporter had to give his birthplace and date to get into the Executive Office Building.

Press Secretary Bill D. Moyers opened the day by declaring that it is "inaccurate and unwarranted" to label new White House security measures as a "gumshoe operation" perpetrated by presidential aide M. Marvin Watson.

Phone Callers Recorded

He acknowledged the practice begun weeks ago by Watson of having telephone callers' names recorded by switchboard operators.

It's mainly in the interests of economy, Moyers said. He added:

"The President tries to operate the White House in the most economical way possible and one aspect of that is a reoriented telephone system which we are trying to study."

Some aides need more phones, some need less, and the checkup system will help decide who needs what.

Furthermore, better presidential security requires a closer phone check, Moyers added, citing a security report made by a committee headed by former Treasury Secretary Douglas Dillon after the Kennedy assassination.

Moyers Watson

. . . economy? security?

What about staff car drivers keeping logs on where they take White House aides?

"That's silly . . . A log has always been kept," Moyers replied. In past years, he added, staff car privileges had been abused by officials who used them for not-so-official business, such as taking a wife to a grocery store or a party.

The White House garage staff has been cut from 100 to 60 in recent months by such close surveillance, Moyers said.

Then he disclosed that he gets reports on what reporters ask of other White House aides.

"I do like to know, and I have asked the special assistants to let me know at the end of the day, to whom they have talked and to know what kind of questions are being asked," Moyers said.

Why?

"Because maybe I can put out a fire; just to be kept informed as press secretary, the man most responsible for speaking for the President. And to my knowledge, the special assistants do keep me informed."

Reporter Checked

Meanwhile, over at the Executive Office Building, a reporter of The Washington Post with an appointment to see Budget Director Charles Schultze was stopped by a guard who had to check by telephone with what he called "097" (White House Police headquarters).

The reporter showed identification, but the guard asked for his birthdate and place, which he checked with "097" before allowing the visitor upstairs.

Assistant White House Press Secretary Joseph Laitin said there had been a mistake, that there are no new, security orders at the EOB, and that a visitor with an apointment and proper identification should be promptly admitted.